The Wreck of the Myrtle

Wilbur Morris Stine

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The Wreck of the Myrtle

AND OTHER VERSES

By

WILBUR MORRIS STINE

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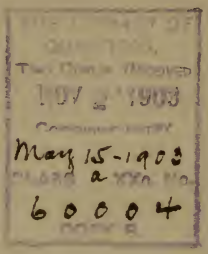

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THE WRECK OF THE MYRTLE

THE WRECK OF THE MYRTLE

I. ST. IGNACE

UPON the Northern Lakes, the reign
Of winter fast and hard had lain;
And tardily the spring again
Dissolved its boisterous spell,
That held the harbors desolate,
And locked each bay and narrow strait
With fetters strong and obstinate,
The sun could not dispel.

Within each ice-bound, sheltered bay,
A fleet of wintering vessels lay
Impatient for the Opening Day,
When they might bend the sail:
But softer grew the skies and clear;

While, over the prairies flat and drear,
The winds of the South blew warm with
cheer,
Where had swept the northern gale.

And on Lake Michigan the spring
Rests now in its full awakening;
The milder sun, that its bright days bring,
Consumes the winter's wrack:
With the tide and swell, the broken floes
Strewn with the waste of drifted snows,
Drive to the lake, when an east wind blows
Through the Straits of Mackinac.

Clear in the spring-tide's softened night,
In the west there burn, like twin stars, bright
The wavering flash of the White Shoal light,
And the beacon on Waugoshance;
While, out on the darkening lake, away,
The eye through the starlit haze might stray
And dream, that no demon of storm could lay
A gale on its calm expanse.

The Wreck of the Myrtle

On the northern shore, that the Straits embrace,
There lies an ancient shipping-place,
Whose romantic name of St. Ignace
Might grace some stately town;
Its rambling streets, a mile or more,
Pass inland from the level shore;
And half hidden by maple and sycamore,
Stand its houses weathered brown.

On a fair May day in this spring-tide bright
There followed a dreamy, moonlit night
Caressed with the south wind's soft delight
From the distant Indies blown:
Toil grudging yields the night surcease;
The lake in the moonlight's mystic peace,
Rejoices at its new release,
In murmured undertone.

From the village streets, half echoed stray
The cries of children at their play:
And in the harbor, where yet stay

The wintering lumber-boats,
Against the starlit evening skies
The clustering masts of the vessels rise;
And from one a flapping dog-vane flies,
Where the schooner Myrtle floats.

Along a straggling street, that led
Straight to the harbor and the head
Of the creeping, weathered pier, where spread
The hulls of the shadowy fleet, —
Two passed with steps, that lingered slow,
As strolling lovers are wont to go;
Till they saw the Myrtle lie below,
At the end of the village street.

Paul was the mate of the staunch old boat;
And, brave as the hardiest tar afloat,
He laughed at the sudden storms, that smote
The sleeping, treacherous lake:
But Martha feared his dangerous trade,
And, most, the summer storms, that played

On the fickle Michigan, and made
The stoutest sailor quake.

Two years had passed, this Easter-tide,
Since Martha had promised to be his bride,
If he forsook the sea and plied
Some homely task ashore;
And Paul had vowed, to win his wife, —
Though he loved his craft, and the sailor's life
Through the summer's calm and the wild storm's strife, —
He would sail the Lake no more.

Yet, how by love's impatience spurred,
He had plied his efforts not deterred,
The passing months his hopes deferred,
To win for her a home:
But the sailing season scarce begun,
The fortune he had sought, was won;
And, when this short May voyage was done,
He need no longer roam.

Beyond the children's noisy play
At merry games, and laughter gay,
They slowly passed along the way,
  That led them to the pier.
Something of sadness seemed to lie
Upon the night; and they scarce knew, why
The sound of the wind fell like a sigh
  For some misfortune near.

They paused at a quiet place, alone,
Where the lights of the Myrtle glimmering
      shone:
Then, suddenly, in ardent tone
  Paul pleaded that they might wed;
But Martha turned her eyes away
From her lover impatient at delay;
And, since she could not say him nay,
  The maiden no word said.

Then she sought his gaze with tearful eye
And pleading look, to make reply, —

While her trembling hand and low-breathed
sigh,
Betrayed an unspoken fear, —
"Oh, Paul, sail not with the Myrtle away;
Give up the sea this very day,
And in St. Ignace on the morrow stay,
Contented with me here!"

In Paul a feeling of anger stirred,
That Martha still his suit deferred;
But, silencing an impatient word,
He sought an answer gay,
That might beguile her passing fear,
That their happiness, which seemed so near,
Might suffer some misfortune drear
Before their wedding-day.

"In this May weather who is afraid?
Just one trip more, my little maid,
Then I will give up the sea!" Paul said,
And kissed her laughingly.

"What would Captain Wilson say,
If I sailed not with the Myrtle away
On the morrow, out on Moran Bay?
And the lads would laugh at me!"

But Martha heard him silent awhile;
Then, with trembling voice and a saddened smile,
She urged her fears, that she might beguile
Her lover to stay ashore:
She turned toward the lights of the schooner, dim,
With its flapping vane on the masthead trim,
While she spoke, — not daring to look at him, —
"The Myrtle will come back no more!"

A secret pang smote the heart of Paul;
For well he knew the sudden squall,
That on the quiet lake might fall
In the smiling month of May:
He spoke not his fears, but laughed instead;

Then, seizing her hands, he gaily said,
" But one trip more, then we will wed
And I will no more away. "

As the lovers homeward slowly passed,
He strove to allay the fears, that harassed
The heart that loved him well; at last,
As they parted at her door,
Paul craved some token to wear, afloat,
While he sailed the lake for his port remote;
And Martha untied from her shapely throat
The crimson ribbon, she wore.

II. THE VOYAGE

ON the morrow the Myrtle her moorings slipped,
Laden with freight for South Haven, shipped;
And, gaily, to Waugoshance they dipped
The colors, that flew from the stern:
In the north-west wind the sails were taut,
And the ship sped along, like a graceful yacht;
While Paul was filled with the constant thought
Of Martha, and his return.

Soon St. Ignace was lost to sight,
And Beaver Isle lay clear on the right;
While far astern sank Gray's Reef light,
As they steered past Goodhart buoy.
The day wore on and the twilight fell,
The lake lay calm in a dreamy spell;
And Paul on the watch heard an evening bell
Ring far from Charlevoix.

Through the twilight clear the stars gleamed
bright;
On the sea-line glimmered a steamer's light,
While the trail of its smoke in the calm,
spring night,
Like a banner, lay on the sky.
Paul with a lover's thoughts, was filled;
His doubts had passed and his fears were
stilled,
As Martha's voice in his heart yet thrilled,
While he dreamed of his wedding nigh.

The quiet voyage made the days slow pass,
For the slumbering lake lay, a sea of glass
Serene, as no storm could its peace harass,
As the lingering days wore on.
They shoreward steered from the deeper
sea,
Keeping sight of the towns on the shelter-
ing lee;
They saw the roofs of Manistee,
And the lights of Ludington.

Through the haze lay Shelby's clustering hills,
Where the spring the scent of the orchards
distills;
And, lazily, the smoke from the scattered mills
Drifted seaward with the breeze.
On the shore by Grand Haven's wind-swept
height,
Lay the bleak sand dunes in the morning
light;
From the merciless drifts of whose shifting
blight,
Rose the tops of buried trees.

III. THE STORM

WHILE off Spring Lake in the waning
night,
The day broke cold with sullen light,
And the fog-cast sky grew lurid bright
With a gleam of threatening red:
The sailor upon the watch growled low,
That, before the night, a gale would blow;
But the day grew fair, and the clouds in its
glow
To the distant sea-line sped.

The rippling lake lay soft in the light;
The sails in the stiffening breeze, were tight;
And, before the storm might break that night,
The Myrtle in port would lie.
The joke sped the rounds of the jolly crew,
While they bent to their tasks the morning
through;—
Soon Ottawa light on the distant view,
Rose clear on the changing sky.

Then swift from the hills the mists rolled fast,
And the sky with clouds grew overcast;
Upon the lake the fog thick massed
Into deepening banks of gloom:
The sun was hid, and an ominous chill
Fell on the air, grown strangely still
In a lull, before the tempest shrill
Broke loud with threatening doom.

Paul at the wheel would have put straightway
For Saugatuck, on their bow away,
To gain the lee of its sheltering bay,
Before the storm might break;
But the captain, thinking the storm but a squall,
Bade the course be changed, where the thickening pall
Rose dark from the sea, like a forbidding wall
To outride the gust on the lake.

With storm-sail set the Myrtle drove, —
While its plunging bow with the cross-waves strove, —

Into the fog, that, thickening, wove
A mantle dark as night.
And swiftly the sea began to rise
Into rolling waves of ominous guise,
Under the lash of the seething skies,
That drove them in wild affright.

The night drew on with deepening gloom,
And fiercer grew the gale; while the boom
Of the waves rose wild with a cry of doom
Against the laboring boat.
The captain knew, that no passing squall
Now lay on the lake in the murky pall;
And well he feared, what might befall
His craft on such night afloat.

As Paul steered the ship in the rising gale,
Ever he heard through the tempest's rail,
A warning cry of moan and wail,
Above the wind's hoarse roar; —
The cry seemed flung from the driving
cloud,

As a ghost had called from the whistling
shroud
The words of Martha, — jeering loud, —
" The Myrtle will come back no more ! "

With but sail to take the waves ahead,
In the teeth of the north-west gale, they sped
Through the laboring night of fear and dread,
A prey of the winds and the main.
In the first grey dawn of the morning light
The captain saw, gleaming mistily bright,
The " mariner's star " on the Temple's height,
In a pause in the driving rain ;

Then the sky-cast lights of Chicago spread
A wavering glow on the clouds ahead ;
While, toward it fast, the Myrtle sped
Under straining, tattered sheet.
The crew through the wash and driving spray,
Close furled the sail, and cast away
The anchors ; and soon the Myrtle lay
With the ships off Van Buren Street.

IV. ADRIFT

TWO days rode the Myrtle to anchors tied,
Amid the rolling fleet; and tried
To come by the breakwater, where inside,
Tossed a score of boats in the lee:
While dashed on the piers and piled on the shore,
Lay many a wreck in the scene before;
Yet, with fury insatiate, the wild winds bore
Across the laboring sea.

The gallant ship had won by its fight
With the storm and seas of that fearful night,
A kindlier fate, than to sink in the sight
Of the city's sheltering bar;
Or, leaking in straining seam and breach,
Be cast, a wreck on the shoaling beach,
To break in the surf, beyond the reach
Of the life-line's plunging car.

But its doom was cast before it sailed;
The ghost of the storm its fate had wailed;
Yet, safe to its anchors, still it trailed
With head to the driving spray.
Its hour had come! and a sinking boat
Its moorings fouled; and, cast afloat,
The breaking surge its bulwarks smote
Till the straining seams gave way:

And tossed in the pitiless western gale,
The mad seas broke on the vessel frail;
While the winds bore away its tattered sail,
So it could not obey the helm.
The hapless crew for safety clung,
Some to the rigging, where they swung,
While the breaking waves their torrents flung,
As the craft they would overwhelm.

The captain and mate were lashed to a stay
On the deck of the cabin, that scarce at bay
Kept the driving surge and drenching spray,
Which swept from the gaining sea.

Vainly, the worn life-crews had tried
To come by the ship through the furious tide;
But their lines had failed of the vessel, wide,
As it drifted helplessly.

Through the afternoon of that fateful day,
The Myrtle dragged at its anchors, astray;
It had tossed by a pier, where piled wrecks lay
Foreboding its own fate.
From the shore and buildings thousands saw
The gallant craft, as it strove with the flaw;
And, silently, in fear and awe
They watched compassionate.

Scarce half a mile from the surf-swept shore,
It lay off Douglas Place, and bore
Toward the south; and, reeling low, the more
Its deck with the waves, was washed.
On the high sea-wall a great crowd pressed
Watching the craft, as it dragged distressed;
While sea after sea upon it pressed
And over it madly dashed.

Though the sweeping wash scarce footing
gave,
As the Myrtle mounted some higher wave,
A sailor would dash with frenzy brave
Across the storm-swept wreck;
And, gaining the cabin, would join the crew,
Who had clung to its shelter the peril
through;
While the crowds were breathless at the
view,
As he crossed the treacherous deck.

A moment, the sun, now sinking low,
Shone through the clouds, on the lake be-
low;
And laid on the sea a golden glow,
Till its billows flashed in the light:
Like a pitying touch from the merciless
skies,
A gleam on the sinking Myrtle lies,
As the Heavens crowned their sacrifice
With radiant splendor bright.

The Wreck of the Myrtle

An instant the Myrtle paused on a wave,
Then, reeling, a terrible lurch it gave;
And the torn ship sank in a yawning grave,
  While the winds shrieked wild with glee.
A cry of horror broke from the crowd,
But the tempest mocked it with jeerings loud;
And the driving spray was the Myrtle's
    shroud,
  As it sank in the pitiless sea.

On the morrow, they found on the shoaling
    beach, —
Cast high beyond the surf's wild reach,
With a chest, which had swept through the
    cabin's breach, —
  The mate cold in death's embrace.
Where he lay in the mild, calm morning
    light,
They opened Paul's coat, and there met their
    sight,
A bow of ribbon, once crimson bright,
  Now pale as his ashen face.

Silently, thence, the life-crew bore
Their burden of death from the surf-beaten
shore;
And little they knew of the sorrow sore
For the mate, who would not come back.
There was weeping that day in St. Ignace,
For sad were hearts in that stricken place; —
And a woman looked seaward, with ashen
face,
On the Straits of Mackinac.

SEPTEMBER, 1902.

HELEN DEANE

A REVERY

HELEN DEANE

A REVERY

I

LIKE romance tender, there falls a
charm
Across life's grey existence,
Whose spiritual touch upon the days,
Falls soft through Care's persistence.

It sheds a tender, softening glow
On lowering days harassing,
Caressing with a wistful gleam
Hours leaden slow in passing.

A charm, it is, of breath divine,
Transmuting fate unbending;

Uplifting man from rule of things
Into the life transcending.—

About the lowly, common thing
The heart may weave its story,
Investing with abiding charm
The mean and transitory;

May clothe with beauty passing fair,
The bleak to others, seeming;
Diffusing on the commonplace
The radiance of its dreaming.

A rural, half-neglected spot,
In winter's squalor lying,
Than all a city's formal show,
Its spire with dome outvying,

May move the heart with deeper touch;
With spell of mystic leading,
May turn the heart, how roaming wide,
Where Love first spoke its pleading.

An object to the passing glance,
  May awake no hidden vision;
Of awkward fashion, faded, worn,
  It meets with half derision:

But Love once touched it, and the heart,
  Old memories to it bringing,
Finds in its faded aspect, still,
  A tender halo clinging.

A realm the charm creates apart,
  Where glows the gold of morning.
And where the heart enchanted views
  Its dreams with youth's adorning;

Where lives renewed its fancies fond,
  Its memories dear in keeping,
Until the heart yields to their joys,
  Forgetful of its weeping.

It grants within the world of sense,
  A world the heart has fashioned, —

A space of light, whose shadows soft
With love are sweet impassioned.

It makes of life a sphere divine,
And proves the soul immortal;
Its tenderness the years outlives,
Nor falters at death's portal.

The soul of things, not grasped by sense,
But to the heart replying, —
It gives assurance to the faith,
We perish not in dying.

II

WHERE Pennsylvania's mountains wind
In ridges low and wooded,
Remote among its central hills,
A valley lies secluded;

From sombre woodlands grimly lift
The bleak Bald Eagle Mountains:

And, risen from their foaming rills
And hidden, limpid fountains,

A river winds in tortuous curves;
Now foaming wild and leaping,
Then, in more placid mood, flows on
Through narrow meadows creeping.

Far from the noisy roads of Trade,
The city's sordid passion,
Life, here sequestered, leads its days
In Nature's simpler fashion.

Far down the valley's narrow course,
On upland high reposing;
Near where the mountains bleak divide,
A narrow glen enclosing, —

A straggling village wanders down
From mountain slope to river;
Whose dwellings sun-embrowned, proclaim
Toil's stern and hard endeavor.

An aspect desolate they wear,
Of poverty and hardship;
The homes of toiling serfs of Trade,
Hard bound to Mammon's lordship:

While he who fattens on their toil,
Apart, dwells in his mansion;
That, proudly on the town beneath,
Looks down with condescension.

Beside a hill the furnace stands
With sloping dome ascending,
Where men in tropic toil delve on,
Its fiery blast attending,

That, suddenly, on midnight skies,
Throws lurid glows appalling;
The fiery prayer of human toil
Upon the heavens calling.

Close by the river, looms the forge
With low, black roofs extended;

Where smoking stacks and throats of fire
  In lurid gloom, are blended.

Its mighty hammer's Titan blows,
  The jar and noise outvying,
The hills and mountain slopes repeat,
  Till lost in echoes dying.

Secluded spot! its life moves on
  Unknowing finer passions,
And scarce the wider world intrudes
  Its changing moods and fashions;

But human beats the unschooled heart,
  How rude may be its token;
And, dumbly known, the bosom thrills
  With deeper life unspoken!

III

HERE memory turns through crowded
years,
The man to youth restoring;
Upon Bald Eagle's rocky slopes
He seems again exploring

For hidden roots and shrinking flowers,
The spring's arbutus trailing
Between bare rocks, its blushing charms
In gentle shadows veiling.

Again, kind Time a June restores
From his perennial treasure, —
A June as bright and wistful fair,
As meant for youthful pleasure.

A cloudless morning heralds day
With new-blown roses fragrant;
And filled with droning song of bee —
Fond Nature's golden vagrant.

From scattered homes, on frolic bent,
  Come laughing youths and maidens;
The youths with baskets weighted down,
  That picnic cheer rich ladens.

Some flush with awkward bashfulness,
  The older men when meeting;
Replying with their eyes downcast,
  To mingled jest and greeting.

The bolder pass with raillery,
  Staid decorum forgetting;
And youth's free laughter rises gay
  From innocent coquetting.

Here two approach half silently,
  A bashful love repressing, —
Her hand to share the basket's weight,
  Laid to his own, caressing.

Half enviously the older folks
  Look on the merry-making;

For grey upon their past lies dim
The gold of Love's awaking:

Old joys find echoes from the past,
To music of the voices;
The passing jests of youth, again,
The heart of age rejoices.

They share with youth its holiday,
The olden thrill remember;
And, soft, the sun of Love's sweet June
Falls low on Life's December.

IV

HAS man in Nature not a part,
No portion in her measure;
Does she not feel the human heart,
Nor count it in her treasure?

Do not her echoes still repeat
A name, love once has spoken;

Does she not hold inviolate still
The vows, that time has broken?

Yields not her heart to ardent youth;
Lives she in moment-seeming;
Within her bosom cold with years,
Lies there no memory dreaming?

Is there no past, no future, then;
Naught but the Instant's being, —
Naught but a Present hardly grasped
And like a shadow fleeing?

Still, in Bald Eagle's wooded glen,
When summer airs are sighing,
When, to the streamlet's drowsy note
The birds are sweet replying;

Mingling with woodland music still,
Echoed in murmuring measures; —
The breeze yet whispers to the leaves
A name that memory treasures.

How changed with time the place has
grown,
And marred with uncouth fashions;
How half-forgotten lies the past,
In stress of present passions; —

There lingers still, as real as then,
The spell of a maiden's beauty, —
Though she has changed, grown sterner
now
By passing task and duty.

V

A MERRY company they were,
Who sought the place of meeting;
And each arrival loud was plied
With welcoming laugh and greeting.

Along the village street they passed
With careless air, not heeding
The quip and jest from store and shop,
Upon their gay proceeding.

Their rendezvous was Pletcher's woods,
Gained by a pathway hiding
Its tortuous length in fragrant shade,
Beyond the railway siding.

Near where the siding met the line,
A post its crude form lifted,
That warned the brakemen, where to stop
The cars, when they were shifted.

The merry party sauntered on
To gain their destination;
And, turning from the village street,
Where stood the railway station,

They followed thence the curving track,
And passed the post, unheeding;
Scarce missing two, who, loitering back,
The lovers' pace were leading.

Fair were the maidens, pleasure bent,
With youthful grace, and winning;

Their laughing eyes and ripening charms
Might urge love's sweet beginning:

But fairest of that company
Was Helen Deane, that morning;
Her dainty beauty, grace and charm,
Needed no art's adorning.

She wore a dainty gown of pink,
With hat the soft shade mating,
That made her seem some budding flower
A richer bloom awaiting.

Her features small and exquisite,
By charms refined, were brightened;
And health's faint flush, that tinged her cheeks,
Her raven hair soft heightened.

Beneath the wide brim of her hat,
That tantalized her lover,

Eyes black as midnight, shyly hid,
  Which, from its friendly cover,

When they were raised coquettingly,
  Sweet answered his heart's pleading:
Their depths mysterious were bright ways
  Into his heaven leading.

Like lovely saint, her air demure
  No guile nor harm could proffer;
She was a shrine, where a loving heart
  Life's incense rich might offer!

In converse low the lovers strolled,
  Not heeding they were nearing
The uncouth post, that barred their path,
  Until, it suddenly appearing,

He paused, while Helen to the right
  Had passed the post; then, bending
His way upon the other side,
  The object scarce attending, —

He moved again to Helen's side,
With quick remark betraying
Impatience, that the post had blocked
The pathway they were straying.

He heeded not, that by his act
He carelessly had broken
A quaint tradition, lovers hold,
Had Helen not quick spoken.

She chided him in gentle wise
On such untrue proceeding;
For he had severed their youthful love
By turning, and not heeding

To follow her, the way she passed; —
And, though in deep contrition
He pleaded he had not meant it thus,
And called it superstition;

Then sought to turn it into jest,
An omen without meaning; —

Yet Helen's eyes were troubled now.
  Still to the portent clinging

With woman's strange insistence, where
  Her finer intuition
The reason of the man outruns, —
  She urged, the quaint tradition

Oppressed her with forebodings vague
  Of a coming separation.
With winsome flush of innate pride
  And love's coy hesitation,

She artless spoke her secret fears:
  For him a life was waiting,
That lay beyond her chosen lot,
  And eager emulating.

With the change the passing years must
      bring,
  His ardent love might languish;
And, though true to her, the joy of love
  Might pass to pain and anguish.

The eyes he loved, with tears were filled,
That would not brook repression;
And Helen flushed, as they betrayed
Her love to bold confession.

Upon her half-averted face,
Lay loveliness supernal, —
Love's miracle transmuting earth
With touch of the eternal.

VI

HOW time and chance have dulled and veiled
The memories of life's passing;
How dreams of youth awakenings rude
Have met through cares harassing; —

One vision yet inviolate stays
And, through the years, grows fairer;
Till half-transcendent it appears
And more ethereal, rarer,

Than flush and tide of passing joys,
The moment's proud occasion, —
A dream enchanting realized
From time's stern, slow evasion !

Tender, as memory of a song,
Where pain half-uttered trembled
In undertones the strains among,
Their gladness scarce dissembled, —

The pang, that Helen's words awoke,
The fear of separation,
Wake tender, now, in memory sweet,
Time gives in reparation.

And still the eyes of youth seem turned
Upon the mountain dreaming,
Serene in mellowed sun of June :
As swaying branch and gleaming

Might yield a solace for its pain ;
Or hide in mystic cover

Some charm against impending fate,
To aid an unhappy lover.

Then Nature seemed but mockery,
To human-kind unfeeling;
Taunting with echoes cries of pain,
Or merry laughter, pealing.

But now the pain and love of youth,
With each sweet June's appearing,
Are more the tender notes of song,
A wistful strain endearing,

Within the melodies, that stray
Amid the trees and fountains,
Where Nature blended with love's young dream,
By the green Bald Eagle mountains.

FEBRUARY, 1903.

TRANSFIGURATION

TRANSFIGURATION

I

THERE falls with the gloom a touch of pain
On the laggard hours of the sullen day,
When the moaning wind fast drives the rain
In wavering sheets of spray;
When, over the hills and the sodden plain,
Broods a leaden mist and grey:
And scarce a bird dares spread its wings
In flight disconsolate,
But in a sheltering grove it cheerless sings
A complaining note to its brooding mate.
The heart grows sad, scarce knowing why,
At the gloom and the sombre sky.

II

When the day to a starless night gives place,
And a mantle of fog wraps field and wood;
While the winds sink low from their furious pace
And lull to a calmer mood:
There falls on the scene a silence vast,
As the land expectant lay,
Till the gloom and the storm be overpast,
And there dawn a sunlit day.
The heart knows not in an azure sky,
Above the brooding mists that lie,
Like a pall upon the dreary scene,
The moon is radiant queen.

III

O Wind of the North, that blowest fair
With quickening breath of purer air!
Ere the hours shall wane to the midmost night,
Drive thou from the land the fog and mist;

That the heart may smile at the distant light
Of the stars through the clouds moon-kissed.
The gleam of the radiant night, is thine;
The mists before thee flee;
Thou loosest the clouds, that the land confine,
By thy breath from the northern sea!

IV

From copse and sombre, darkening wood;
From dell and rain-moist solitude;
From mirroring pool and mimic lake,
The limpid streams, that through the meadows flow;
From bog and fen, and fern-spread brake,
And lowland fields the gold-white daisies know:
Up rise the mists, like departing ghosts,
From the brooding ranks of the storming hosts,
Who conquered the day
With fog and spray.

V

Up rise the mists, like white, fair forms,
From the coverts, where they ranged
Through the sullen day, — the creatures
of storms,
Now to silver-white zephyrs changed!
With white arms outspread,
They gracefully rise
And, with airy tread,
Seek the bending skies.

VI

Like gossamer of finest lace,
Their garments cling with witch-
ing grace;
Whose folds with silver gleaming
bright,
But half conceal limbs moulded white,
And a being ravishing,
While they pass on bended wing.
Upon the still, calm air they float,

As eager for the skies remote;
While the trail of their garments lingering
clings
To the earth, as they rise on spirit wings.

VII

They sway and bend on outspread wings;
Awhile they hover above the fields:
In the spell of the charm, that their beauty
flings
To the shrouding night, that softly
shields
Their entrancing forms of ecstasy,
From the vulgar, common eye.
In lingering flight they slowly pass,
In the lulling calm of a rapturous trance;
And, in airy measures over the grass,
They circle and sway in a dreamy dance.

VIII

In the strength of their new-born spirit power,
In the thrill of their wings outspread on the air,

The spirit hosts, through the calm night hour,
Rise in ranks majestic fair.
On the enraptured arms of a fragrant breeze,
They have charmed from the meadows and
lured from the trees,
They are borne along
In stately throng;
With measured flight, the enchanting array
In airy grace, slow wafts away.
The meadows and fields grow dark with pain,
While they mourn the loss of their hosts in
vain
And gathering drops of the evening dew;
While the breeze complains the long night
through.

IX

To the crown of the distant hills they move,
Where they gather in fair, white ranks;
While the gleaming hosts their numbers prove,
Who have come from the fields, the mead-
ows and banks

Of the mirroring pools and murmuring
streams;
Like the gathering hosts of a warrior's dreams.
Then, like burst of a glorious song, they
rise,
On the wings of its strains they upward
float;
They bend their flight to the midnight skies,
And are lost in their depths remote.

X

The moon in the midst of the heavens rides;
And its sphere with radiance crowned,
Revealed in full, majestic round,
Pours its light in splendid tides.
From the skies beneath, by the north wind
kissed,
The clouds have dissolved in ethereal mist:
The wavering stars shine faintly bright,
Dimmed by the gleam
Of the moon supreme,
And the sheen of its conquering light;

That, in splendid tides,
Their lustre hides
In the darkening amethyst.
Like a wistful touch of the mystery,
That broods on the shoreless, moonlit sea,
On the midmost hour of the lucid night,
An expectant hush abides.

XI

Then forth from the languorous South
remote;
Upborne on the tide of the higher air,—
On the vast expanse of the heavens, float
The multitudes of beings fair.
In seried ranks, with phalanx wide,
As the shoreless waves on the sea's expanse,
The zephyrs of mist in the azure ride;
And, borne on the wings of the air, advance.
From the taint of the fen, grown purified,
The formless earthly deified;
The spirits of storm in celestial guise,
As lost in the spell of their rapturous grace, —

Through the hush profound of the heaven's
space,
Slow move on the midnight skies.

XII

As thrilled with the charm of their beauty
weird,
They move toward the moon in the heavens
ensphered;
Under the spell of their ecstasy,
Upborne on the calm of immensity,
Supernal in their loveliness, —
In countless throngs they sway and press.
From beyond the far horizon's verge,
Where the sky and the earth in darkness
merge,
They move, like an army in the skies,
Or an angel throng in celestial guise, —
Toward the crowning splendor of their
dream;
That, in silver tide on their wings of
white,

Shall fall through the hush and the awe of
the night,
While they pass in the moonlight's
gleam.

XIII

The phantom army slowly nears
The zenith of the splendid night;
The vanguard of the host appears,
Where the silver rays of enchanting
light,
Like the tides of a holy grail,
Fall on forest, hill and vale.
In the calm of a majesty serene,
On snowy white, extended wing;
With celestial grace of spirit mien,
Of some divine, high fashioning:
The lovely host of airy forms,
Zephyrs born of the summer's storms;
Wraiths transformed from the common
earth,
Its mists and fogs, through spirit birth, —

On the far, pure heights of the mid-
night sky,
In victorious legions, waft on high.

XIV

Like a measured chant of celestial song,
That for very sweetness pauses, fain
That its infinite melodies may prolong
The raptures of its passing strain: —
Beneath the splendid moon they pass in myri-
ads spread,
Till the face of the sky with enchanting forms,
is gleaming white;
While the silver sheen of the moon upon each
spirit head,
Lays a halo caught from the iris bow, in daz-
zling light.
An aureole crowns each being fair;
It gleams amid the flowing hair,
That floats like a mist on the lucent air; —
And softly the circle of radiant hues,
Its splendor from the moon renews.

XV

Through the hours of the calm and silent night;
In mysterious hosts, majestic, slow
The phantom legions come and go
In countless throngs and infinite.
Wooed by the spell of loveliness,
From starlit space they eager press,
That an aureole crown may glitter bright
Upon each brow of snow.
From the farthest bounds of the darkened verge,
Like the myriad waves of the flashing sea,
Till the heavens are filled with their charms, — they urge,
Enthralled by an ecstasy,
To spread their filmy wings in the silver sheen;
And, poised in the calm of the heights serene,
Wear the coronal of prismal gleam,
The beatitude of their splendid dream.

XVI

Ceaselessly in majestic flight
Their legions sweep to the chrismal light;
Calm in the joy of their holy dream,
Through the passing hours their myriads teem,
Transfigured as they fly:
Till the moon declines from the gathering dawn,
And pales in its kindling radiance;
Then, with break of day,
They haste away;
The spirit hosts of the air are gone;
And the glorious flight of their heavenly trance
Slow fades in the northern sky.

XVII

They vanish and pale, like dissolving mist
At the kindling touch of the sun;
As the clouds slow fade from the amethyst,
In the glow of the day begun;
But the rapturous grace of their spirit forms,

The sweep of their pinions fair;
The chrismal flight of the hosts of the storms,
And the coronals they wear: —
These vanish not with the fading throng,
For not of the night and mist are they;
But their splendors, like exalted song,
In lingering echoes stay.
The soul of beauty a moment shone
Embodied in visioned grace,
Through the solemn hush of the night, alone,
In the calm of celestial space;
And, in being fair, it moved on the wraith,
Like the dream of a far ideal;
That the heart may hold in abiding faith,
The beautiful is real.

XVIII

O Spirits of Mist from fen and field,
The Phantom Shapes from the fog-veiled land!
To the heart an ecstasy you yield,

That its humbling gloom with splendor
grand,
May pass from the common day.
From the storms, that sweep with wail and
moan;
From the waste and fen of a wearied life;
From the veiling grief and the sadness
thrown
On the heart bowed down in a noble
strife:
The veil and the gloom grown spirit-fair,
May rise on the calm of diviner air,
And in beauty waft away!
The thoughts grown cold in task and moil,
From the heart repressed in wasting toil,
May bend their flight to heights sublime,
And seek some far, celestial clime;
Where they, transformed through higher birth
To spirit grace and form divine,
Like the radiant hosts of the night, —
may shine,
And wing from the sordid earth!

XIX

By Fancy's mystic touch and grace,
Our thoughts no more are cold;
From out their sordid day and place,
They rise on pinions bold.
As, far, on upward wing they soar,
To brightness grown and beauty more:
Like the spirit legions of the skies,
To realms serene they rise.
There, calm in some celestial height,
They move to the chrismal touch of light;
And, in the gleam of a heavenly tide,
From commonness, grow deified!
And are the fancies lowly born, of earthly grace;
Are they but things of airy, passing mist:
Yet, in ethereal realms of visioned space,
Exalted, they as truth exist!
Our mounting thoughts, that seek the skies,

Unchanging in abiding youth,
They pass in far, celestial guise,
The beatitudes of immortal truth!

XX

From the depths of the calm and silent night,
From the gleam of the distant sphere of light;
In the hush and awe of the midnight hour:
There falls on the soul an unseen power;
Like the echoes of some passing strain,
That wakes to melody again.
And Fancy to the vision brings,
Illumed with some celestial tide,
The grace and the charm, that the day denied.
By power divine it takes the laboring thought,
The things of day, with dullness fraught;
And, on its wide, aspiring wings,
It bears them in majestic flight,
Unto serene, exalted height
Above the life of toil and wrong.
And, there, transformed in the spirit light,

Transfiguration

Like the passing hosts of the splendid night,
They move divine as strains of song;
In ecstasy of inspired thought,
And rapture with far meaning fraught.
O Vision of the mist and night;
The Spirit Hosts, and the chrismal light!
The heart grows sure in faith through you,
The beautiful is true.

August, 1902.

CEDARCROFT

CEDARCROFT

"O VALE of Chester! trod by him so oft,
Green as thy June turf keep his memory. Let
Nor wood, nor dell, nor storied stream forget,
Nor winds that blow round lonely Cedarcroft;
Let the home voices greet him in the far,
Strange land that holds him; let the messages
Of love pursue him o'er the chartless seas
And unmapped vastness of his unknown star!"

Bayard Taylor, by WHITTIER.

I

FROM Kennett's quaint, half-ancient square,
Where memories of Martha Deane
Linger in tender, sweet appeal, —
As storied past alone were real, —
A lovely valley, green and fair,

Between broad, clustering hills, is seen.
No fairer prospect Taylor knew,
Perhaps, his restless wanderings through
From arctic skies to tropic sun,
Than the valley of Toughkenamon;
Within whose ways, and woodlands
green,
With facile pen and pleasing art,
He wove the spell of homely scene,
That was a message from his heart.

From this quaint square, a village
street
Leads northward, lined with dwellings
neat,
Embowered in vines and wide-spreading
trees,
With glimpse of flowers and shrubberies;
Until, the village passed, the street
Becomes a public way, that leads,
Bordered with vines and wayside weeds,
By fields of corn and ripening wheat;

Over the rolling hills, past farms
And lawns, where peacefully repose
Quaint homesteads hidden half with
charms
Of ivy and the rambling rose.

At length the rustic road ascends
A gentle hill, and eastward bends
Around the fields and wooded slope,
Where Taylor, Nature's gifted boy,
Learned her full range of song and joy;
While she instilled a dawning hope,
That grew through years to a noble aim,
And led her child to lasting fame.

Bordered with trees, there passes
down
To lowland hidden from the town,
A lane, that leads to the humble home,
Which nurtured well the child of song;
Which early he forsook to roam
Through Alpine pass, and foreign lands,

And Norway's ice-wrapped peaks among,
And cross the desert's trackless sands.

How strange, that through these
peaceful ways,
Where Nature rests in beauty rare;
In that stern life of other days, —
There passed these lanes and paths along,
That child, whose high, aspiring song
In years mature, but voiced the lays
And drew those passing visions fair,
He learned these hills and woods among!

What Hand Unseen anointed him
To Nature's priest and acolyte!
To leave these fields and woodlands
dim,
And dare the far and toilsome height
Of song and art; to leave the plow,
And rustic life of dull content,
To win some goal of early vow;
When he scarce grasped its high intent?

What Power, within his boyish heart,
Deep hid the seal of song and art;
And taught his pen its minstrelsy,
Its wild, deep chords of harmony?

Where the rustic lane the highway
meets,
A vine-grown, noble entrance greets
The visitor to Cedarcroft.
Majestic trees, that bear aloft
A wealth of intermingling shade,
Are the sole guardians of the gate
And keeper's lodge; with shadows soft
They stand in stately colonnade,
As conscious of their high estate,
And point the way to a mansion tall,
With formal rooms and spacious hall.
Here, had the boy in childhood's way
Indulged the pleasing fancy's play,
Of a mansion and extended park
Crowning the hillside brown and stark.
Here, when in later years, returned

With fortune and high honors earned,
Where he had passed his humble youth,
Upon this hillside wild, uncouth,
He placed the home he loved and prized;
A youthful fancy realized!

II

HILLSIDE and woodland, and the varied view
Of rich, brown upland laid with vivid green;
The vision's reach of orchards, fields, and town
In sheltered spot, broad, rolling hills between;

And Nature in her gentle summer mood;—
How this calm loveliness may charm; for sake
Of him, who gave them fame in song and tale,
These scenes, he loved, a deeper meaning take.

And Cedarcroft, once sacred to the Muse,
Now, more a wild-grown park with ivied tower,
Is hallowed ground, for memories of One,
Who loved its winding walks and woodland bower.

On brow of sloping hill, there lay a path
The Poet loved; whose mingling branches met
In fragrant arch above the pine-strewn path;
Where sunlight pierced the shade, with golden fret.

In happier days he named it "Poet's Walk";
For friends the Muse had crowned with lasting fame;
Who passed with him its shaded way along,
And left their memory to endear its name.

Here came the Quaker Poet; here, Lanier
Heard woodland music murmur in the breeze;
And One of deathless song, for whom the pines
Breathed low his own Acadian melodies.

And still the pleasant walk the pines embower
With giant trunk, and stately limbs and strong;

The passing breeze, that sways their branches
hoar,
Yet wakes their murmurs into strains of
song.

In gently murmured tones the pines still sing
The sylvan song, that Taylor loved to hear;
Whose echoes linger in his lays, and Ode,
That celebrates the Nation's Century year.

In their low strains a note of sadness sings:
In half neglect the woodland path now
leads
Its solitude; the pines spread wide their gaunt,
Dead limbs above the tangled vines and
weeds.

In vain they wait the Poet's steps; for him
They lay their faded green upon the dead
And mouldering forest leaves; the seasons
pass,
The Poet comes no more, the Muse has fled!

III

SOMETHING beyond the ken of sense,
A sweet, abiding influence;
A wistful touch of sentiment,
The spiritual with earthly blent;—
Still lingers, where in other days
A human life fulfilled its ways
Of pain, or strife, or calm repose;
Where caught the hope of breaking day;
Where waited for the shadowed play
Of purple gleams, that marked its close;
Where passed the miracle of birth,
That through all time transforms the earth
From failure and decrepitude,
To youth and fairer hope renewed;
Where Love grasped hands in sorrow mute,
Or sought its rest in peaceful eyes,
And brighter made the golden fruit,
That crowned the arduous enterprise!

Something the very stones endues,
That build the spot, where human hearts
Loved, mourned, and filled life's homely
parts; —
That, in their silence, still renews
The spiritual, that wins our life
To higher goal from sordid strife!

And Cedarcroft, that fondly wears
The laurels of the Muse entwined
About the home its walls enshrined, —
A deeper, holier interest bears,
For echoes of inspiring song,
That rose its bowers and halls among.

How fondly cherished for these strains
Divine, set here to rich accord
Of thought and high, enduring word,
Whose fair enchantment never wanes, —
Yet Cedarcroft, past its high fame,
Past honors to its Founder's name,
To deeper love makes mute appeal:

Its shadowed rooms and ways reveal
The lasting impress of a noble heart, —
Simple with trust in Nature, pure
As was its childhood's lofty dream;
Strong for the manly task, and part
In struggle for an art supreme;
That turned from clamant, passing fame,
And wrought with single, noble aim
For perfect form, that should endure.

But desolate and mournful, now,
Stands Cedarcroft upon the brow
Of unkempt hillside; the shrub and box,
That bordered formal paths and walks,
With broken ranks in mild decay,
Seem grieved for its departed day.
The mimic lake, that eastward lay
Close by the hedge-row cedars grim,
That gaily tossed their shadows dim,
Neglected lies, a dull morass
Of waving reeds and tangled grass.
The cedars, too, that were the pride

Of this estate, and christened it
With pleasing name, with openings wide
Within their broken, shattered rows,
Bear more, dead branches gnarled and knit,
Than glistening green of spreading boughs.

And westward, where in pristine days
There stood tall, clustering chestnut trees
Of giant girth, — three monarchs hoar
From some primeval forest state,
Survivors from past centuries, —
These, too, have shared the common fate;
Their shattered limbs no more upraise
A wealth of green to meet the breeze.
The besom of decay has smitten sore
Their regal pomp; the lightning seared
Their stately crowns, that once endeared
Them to the Poet; mournful now
With mouldering trunk and scanty bough,
They are but passing memories,
That linger in some pleasing lays.

JUNE, 1903.

THOUGHT AND FANCY

A HYMN TO THE INTELLECT

I

STRONG Human Mind!
From conquests proud! with deep,
far-reaching sight
You search all space to outmost, gleaming
star,
Your feeble vision armed with skill, afar
To scan each circling sun and satellite,
That crowns the radiant night.

II

Tireless, you seek
The way the world's Creator moved, when He
Called into being from the pregnant space,

The wealth of myriad worlds; and in His
grace
Gave light to all the vast immensity
Of suns in their degree.

III

Creation's steps
You trace anew; and sun and star you call
To being from some potent dust evolved:
You set celestial years, since they revolved
New-formed, to speed their glowing ways in
thrall
Of law, that rules them all.

IV

From age to age,
Your tireless search, that spurns its toil and pain,
And midnight vigil, finds the secret bands,
That hold their trackless paths; with
wearied hands
You weigh each glowing mass and search amain
What guards its starry reign.

V

With skill divine,
From wandering lights you read in prismal tale,
Whose every tone is wrought in unheard song,
What builds the might of distant worlds, that throng
All space; and countless suns, whose radiance pale
Kindles the silver veil.

VI

Emotionless,
You touch the life of flowers, discerning not
The thrill, that kindles at their varied glow:
Whose tints are living hues, that pulse and flow
Through forms, whose radiant beauty — passing thought —
By Hands Unseen, is wrought!

VII

Professing truth,
You would be one with matter's being, blend
With powers, that mould the common earth
and air,
And kiss of sun, into their structures fair;
That, haply, you may grasp the utmost end
Of ceaseless Being's trend.

VIII

Your conquests done, —
Their ceaseless being's trend is woven bright
With warp of matter, and with woof of
life:
They are but victors in an endless strife,
That animates the dust to greet the light;
To bloom and pass from sight.

IX

How men may praise,
Our hearts will yet reject your final word.

Your search has found a harp of pulsing
strings;
While we would hear the song of life, that
sings
In tint and glow, and form, in full accord
And wealth of beauty poured.

X

No limits set
Their warding bounds to your all-searching
eye;
You compass space and sound the hidden
deep;
Its weird, contorted life, it can not keep
From your truth-seeking sight; nor low, nor
high
Their secrets long deny.

XI

Where Nature rules
In all her vast complexity, no pause
You find, nor stay; till, grasping one by one

Her varied forms, you show, that each
begun
In simple life, to complex grows by laws
You phrase, "The First, Great
Cause!"

XII

In matter dwells
A power that challenges; you take the quest,
And feel the throb of that vast enginery
Which Nature moves in its immensity
In tireless round, that knows no pause, nor rest
Fulfilling her behest.

XIII

And Matter's self
You seek, and search to utmost reach of sight;
The atom's wondrous world, you fain ex-
plore
To trace its orbit with harmonic lore;
And prove the chords, the atoms firm unite
In bonds of crystal might.

XIV

Vast is the gain!
For powers, that, like some spirits, move unknown
To sight, that grasps but gross, material things,
You wield to work your will and give thought wings;
While golden light, which through past ages shone,
Upon your night is thrown.

XV

The quest supreme,
The source of life! you press with vigor on:
Where matter blends with life, that moves and moulds
Its inert mass, a mystery enfolds
A truth so vast, that, through its glimmering dawn,
All other truths were won.

XVI

With matter bound,
Yet not with matter one, forever flies
The source of life from laws, which the atoms, sway:
Life yields its growth, departing, leaves decay;
And, souling matter, on it mystic lies
In power, all search defies.

XVII

O faltering Mind!
Your conquering power stays at the gates of life!
Beyond their bounds no human strength can fare;
The lore, which, as God's word, to men you bear,
Is human still, from age when it was rife
And struggled in your strife!

XVIII

Beyond all thought,
There moves a Hand, which shapes in unknown way
The vast and small; and grants life's secret strength; —
Here ends your quest, O Human Mind, at length!
Beyond the mystic realm of matter's sway,
Eternal barriers stay!

SEPTEMBER, 1900.

TRUTH AND SONG

I

WHEN Night leads on its myriad stars,
That burn and glow in ceaseless round,
A mystic way in golden bars
Shines on to truth, through space profound.

We lift our feverish eyes above
To search, where breaks some glorious dawn;
Our hearts are thrilled; worlds beckoning move,
A way we follow, follow on.

II

Night clothes with tender, purple gleam
The distant mountain, and the wind

Low whispers of diviner dream
And beauty, than our senses find.

It whispers through the deepening night,
Sings in mysterious orison:
There gleams, somewhere, the perfect light,
That we may follow, follow on.

III

They lead us on, forever on,
The night and the whispered orison;
Our hearts would fare, where Truth has gone;
Would follow, ever follow on!

IV

The sun low bending to the sea,
Beyond the memory of its shore,
Lays on its broad immensity
A way of gold, where splendors pour.

Where fares this glorious way along;
Where passes, when its gleam has gone?

L. of C.

Its glory lingers like a song,
That bids us follow, ever on!

V

The leaves, that sound in the passing breeze
And murmur in a mystic voice;
The rustling, moaning songs of trees,
That in the passing day rejoice:

Our doubting hearts thrill at their calls,
And join their songs in unison;
They follow, where their sweetness falls;
Their songs they follow, ever on.

VI

O Truth and Song! they follow thee;
They follow on the gleaming sea,
They follow thy sweet minstrelsy;
They follow, ever follow thee!

SEPTEMBER, 1900.

NIGHT AND DEATH

NIGHT and the silent stars,
Night on the moaning bars!
While the hush and awe of the mystery
In the moaning tides of the restless sea,
That forever sweep on its pathless deep,
Seems the touch of eternity.

Night and the flashing sea,
Night and immensity!
From the distant surge on the rock-bound shore,
There breaks a cry through its muffled roar,
In murmured tone of wail and moan,
That shall rise forever more.

Death and the night of sleep,
Death and the silence deep!

Through the anguished hush, there distant
sound
In the mystery of an awe profound,
The terrors wide of that unknown tide,
That bears the soul on its outmost
bound.

Night and the pang of death,
Night and the passing breath!
Though the soul shrinks back from a way
untrod,
And lifts its cry at the chastening rod,
On the anguish strange of that unknown
change,
Rests the boundless love of God!

AUGUST, 1902.

BIRDS OF SONG

BIRDS of song,
Gladsome song,
Who has tuned your fluting phrase;—
Warbled notes,
Liquid notes
Thrilling through the summer days;
Golden sweet, silver clear,
Borne on breezes far and near?

Whence your song,
Blithesome song,
Varied but unchanging sung;—
Welling notes,
Echoed notes,
Olden, still forever young;—
From the flowers, from the skies,
Whence have sprung your melodies?

From a life,
Welling life
Pulsing sweet in hearts of joy,
They are sung,
Joyous sung, —
Pleasure without harm's alloy;
Spirit touch, Beauty's thought;
Gold with jeweled rays inwrought!

Lyric thrush,
Russet thrush
Lifting song in torrid noon,
Hails the day,
Speeds the day,
Sings to fields and woods aswoon;
Like some flute blown by the breeze,
Hymns the heart of forest trees.

Minstrel friend,
Poet friend,
Bard in red, that greets the spring,
Bringing joy,

New-born joy,
Song and life on constant wing; —
True of heart, red of breast,
Bird of home, we love it best!

Mellow trills,
Cadenced trills
Rise from hedge and wayside tree;
Magic song,
Dream-like song,
Phrase of sweet-borne melody; —
Vesper hymn, sparrow lay,
Madrigal of closing day.

Matin choir,
Vesper choir,
Priests of dawn, that greet the sun;
Flowers awing,
Songs awing,
Minstrels, yet, when day is done; —
Souls of song, souls of air,
They are gladness everywhere!

JUNE, 1901.

PAPILIO

FLITTING, painted butterfly,
Wanton mote, you flutter by,
Poising light on gauzy wing;
Filmy, airy, dainty thing!

Little, sportive, trembling flower,
Fairy for a summer hour;
Spirit loosed from sordid earth,
Grown divine through higher birth;—

If on wing you broke in song,
Gaily as you float along,
What a clear and elfin lay,
What a merry roundelay,
You would lilt from tiny throat;
Wanton, filmy, floating mote!

Papilio

A sweet, ethereal ecstasy
You would utter in your glee,
Clear as note of woodland fay, —
Echoing, dying, far-away ;
Soft as strains from spiraled shell,
The fairies blow in hidden dell,
When, around the woodland flower
They merrily dance on a midnight hour.

The haunting sweetness of your song
In airy echoes would prolong ;
Upon the fragrant air would float,
Softer, finer, more remote,
Than trumpet notes of mystic spell
Blown by elf from purple bell,
The morning-glories gay unfold
For bugle of a fairy bold.

AUGUST, 1902.

OCTOBER

I

COLD is the passion of the year! the air
Unburdened, more, with showers blows laughing cool
Through leaf and stem it once caressed to mad,
Luxuriant growth; they feel no passion, more.
The storms of summer cease; no angry mood
On instant covers heaven's face serene
In grace of life, with frown of coming wrath
And tempest's sweep; now fall the winds in song.
Hushed is the song of growth! the harvest calls
From wood and field; through rustling shock and leaf
Arrayed for death, the herald winds sing low
Of winter's rage; the song of birth has ceased.
The song of birth is joy; the song of death is fear;—
O summer flown, dead is the passion of the year!

II

SOUND, autumn winds, the summer's death! for you
The harvest ready stands; the corn is ripe,
Its gold but waits the silver touch of frost,
Till harvest moon shall light the husking rites.
Blow ice-lipped winds! the kerneled nut awaits
Your chill to burst its bonds and see the sun
At last, which fed its hidden life, and fall
The prize of laughter and bewitching eyes.
Moan winds of death, and touch the laggard flowers,
That timid lift their bloom toward skies grown chill;
Till, suddenly, they fall asleep and lay
Their sere and withered hopes on earth grown dead!
Sound, autumn winds, moan out your dirge with icy breath;
Sing to the stricken flowers, your wail for summer's death!

III

MOAN, autumn winds, the summer's dirge! no fleet
And fickle breeze are you, to coy with flowers
And dance with leaves in wild abandon sweet,
Through woodland moist and echoing songs of birds.
Blow with strong will, O autumn winds! now hold
Your course unerring fast, pour out your plaint
And moan in weariness for way you came
From the North to distant lands of mellow sun.
Pour out your moan, O steadfast winds; in low,
Sad monotone sigh out your tale of frost,
That stings as death, and ice-bound waste, whose sun,
Too weak for life, but gilds the track of death!
Blow autumn winds, hold steadfast course, your wild ways urge;
Moan out your threat of death, and sigh the summer's dirge!

OCTOBER, 1901.

THE INWARD SEA

WITHIN my heart there moves a viewless sea,
Whose tides a dim, compelling power obey,
Which ceaseless casts their waves on moaning shores,
That else might murmur in sun-kissed content.
Across its bar there pass far notes more sweet,
Than chords, which thrill its nearer strand; some stray,
Faint echoings, fine and spirit-clear, of song,
Whose melodies in distant murmurs fall.
Upon its depths fierce storms of passion rise,
That vent their rage in blinding spray, till all
Their agony is spent; then sink the waves,
And sun and calm woo in the day of peace.
O sea of storm, of song and calm, within my breast;
Of sun-kissed, moonlit splendors, and of wild unrest!

NOVEMBER, 1901.

THE LONG, LONG DAYS

I

THEY ceaseless come and go, the passing days,
Whose numbers round the span of life; they rise
In vista long before the wearied eye,
Heedless of cry for boon of rest and clasp
Of love, that was life's sun! There will be days
Of spring, when hope fresh greens with inspired light,
Whose dawning hailed with song, will yield the night
A benison; and days will come of fruit
And ear for some rich harvest-tide; and some
May chance without the gift of light, whose steps
Fall heavy on the laden heart, and ears

Grown strangely dull to once loved noble
strains.
They come and go, whose coming no hand
stays;
They come, with gleam or cloud, — the long,
long days!

II

BROKEN by dreams, till they shall cease
in sleep,
The sure procession of our days moves on;
They loom before in phantom shapes, that
wait
The beck of Hours to lead them by the hand
Through being's steps. From sadness and the
loss
Of days no more; from emptiness, and toil,
That scattered seed in patience, sparing not, -
Hope ever pleads, the days, that are to be,
Shall pass not as the dull hours known, but
shall
Be gladsome harvest-tide for fruit of toil:

And we, who pause for weariness, will find
In them the song, the heart unuttered held,—
The while they come, whose brighter gold we
keep,
The long, long days, till they shall end in sleep!

OCTOBER, 1901.

NOTES

I. Page 7

THE WRECK OF THE MYRTLE

The ballad is based circumstantially on the loss of a ship and its entire crew, off the beach at Chicago, during one of the most severe storms that has been known to visit the Northern Lakes. The facts of the shipwreck, were communicated to the author by Mr. James Keeley, the managing editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, in a letter which is here given at length. The further narrative of the ballad is so fully developed in the verses, that the reader probably will not require any comment upon it.

"Chicago, August 29, 1902.

"The schooner Myrtle, Captain Wilson, went down off Thirty-fifth Street, with the captain and crew of five men, at half-past six o'clock, on the evening of May 18, 1894. It was among the vessels anchored off Van Buren Street; and, in the afternoon, it was thought to be safe, until another vessel slipped its anchor and fouled it. The Myrtle was

driven south to the point where it sank. During the several hours that it drifted down the lake, — most of the time with only the masts showing, — the crew could be seen standing together on the roof of the cabin. Heroic efforts were made to rescue the crew, but all the attempts failed.

The Myrtle was built at Milan, Ohio, in 1857; and its home port was Chicago."

II. Page 7

Impatient for the Opening Day.

It is customary for the insurance underwriters to appoint a particular day in the spring of each year, when navigation upon the Lakes may be resumed. The date is determined by the disappearance of the ice from the straits and harbors.

III. Page 10

—— *The sudden storms that smote*
The sleeping, treacherous lake.

The Lakes, and Lake Michigan in particular, in the spring and early summer, are liable to sudden and violent storms which rapidly raise a dangerous sea. These storms are dreaded by the sailors, and

they make navigation on the Lake especially uncertain and dangerous.

IV. Page 22

The "mariner's star" on the Temple's height.

The lantern of the Masonic Temple, which is occupied by the Hydrographic Office, is provided with a crown of arc lights. As they are located at an elevation of some three hundred feet, they can be seen to a great distance at sea.

V. Page 26

A sailor would dash with frenzy brave,
Across the storm-swept deck.

The author was one of the vast crowd gathered along the sea-wall, watching the sinking vessel; and when the Myrtle was first seen by him, several sailors were on the masts, clinging to the remains of the rigging. Just before the vessel sank, one after another, waiting for a favorable moment, dashed across the deck and joined those of the crew already on the roof of the cabin. Realizing the approaching catastrophy, a feeling of comradeship probably excited them to the forlorn attempt.

VI. Page 31

HELEN DEANE

A ballad or narrative poem, according to certain standards of criticism, should develop some definite plot, or compass a completed action. Either of these qualities being wanting, the lack of unity is supposed to be supplied by suggestiveness of a something, which the author had not cared to express broadly, or had been unable to develop; or, by recourse to some phase of conventional romance.

Should an author insist on being individual, and pursue a simple action in a style, which is natural and unaffected, though not in accord with accepted conventions: there are readers, who might ignore the claims of the lines on their attention, and dismiss them as mere commonplace.

When contemplating the narrative of *Helen Deane*, a commonplace object — a post at a railway siding — was purposely selected to bear out the intention of the poem; which was, that natural objects, when they influence or are associated with the deep and abiding phases of life, to this extent, acquire a spiritual significance.

This significant thought for the poem is expressed in the lines from the introduction (page 32),

Notes

About the lowly, common thing,
The heart may weave its story.

The suggestion for the poem was received upon reading some critical passages by W. D. Howells. Old as the controversy over the ideal opposed to the real, is, it is still mooted with its ancient vigor somewhat diminished, and reappears under many insidious disguises. It is not the purpose of these remarks to enter the old lists, or add to an already overburdened issue, beyond expressing a belief in the harmony of the real and the ideal, and protesting against dignifying the products of the merely conventional imaginaries by the term of "idealism". I will venture to instance a quotation from a most suggestive book. *

"We are beginning to see and to say, that no author is an authority except in those moments when he held his ear close to Nature's lips and caught her very accent.

"It remained for realism to assert that fidelity to experience and probability of motive, are essential conditions of a great imaginative literature. It is not a new theory, but it has never before universally characterized literary endeavor. When realism be-

*"Criticism and Fiction," by W. D. Howells.

comes false to itself, when it heaps up facts merely, and maps life instead of picturing it, realism will perish too. Every true realist instinctively knows this, and it is perhaps the reason why he is careful of every fact, and feels himself bound to express or to indicate its meaning at the risk of over-moralizing. In life he finds nothing insignificant; all tells for destiny and character; nothing that God has made is contemptible. He can not look upon human life and declare this thing or that thing unworthy of notice, any more than the scientist can declare a fact of the material world beneath the dignity of his inquiry. He feels in every nerve the equality of things and the unity of men; his soul is exalted, not by vain shows and shadows and ideals, but by realities, in which alone the truth lives."

VII. Page 34

Where Pennsylvania's mountains wind
In ridges low and wooded.

In central Pennsylvania a somewhat winding valley extends for miles between the broken range of the Bald Eagle Mountains, and high, rolling hills. Through this valley flows a stream bearing the name of the mountains. Situated at the extremes of the

valley, are the towns of Lock Haven, and Tyrone. It is a region, which possesses singular beauty and attraction, aside from any associations for those familiar with it.

VIII. Page 73

CEDARCROFT

These lines are an expression of appreciation of the poetical work of Bayard Taylor, and admiration of its artistic worth and quality of high inspiration. To the author, he was not so much a writer of charming romance and vivid descriptions of travel, — these seem, rather, incidental to the circumstances of his life; — he was preëminently the poet. The poetical work of no American poet more richly repays close study; the reader chances on many lines of exquisite diction and charming cadence, and passages of classical purity. With him, the desire to be remembered by posterity as a poet, amounted almost to a passion; and one to be sincere, who pays a tribute to Taylor's literary work, must recognize preeminently his devotion to the Muse.

Cedarcroft was suggested by a visit to the home, that in its decay is still eloquent of its Founder.

Notes

IX. Page 73

From Kennett's quaint, half-ancient square,
Where memories of Martha Deane
Linger in tender, sweet appeal.

The Unicorn Tavern described in the "Story of Kennett," stood on this square; and almost directly opposite, was the modest home of Martha Deane.

X. Page 85

And westward, where in pristine days
There stood tall, clustering chestnut trees.

A group of lordly chestnut trees grew on the lawn near the hall at Cedarcroft. Perhaps no objects about his home, were more endeared to Bayard Taylor. In the *Inscription* of his "Poetical Works," * *To the Mistress of Cedarcroft*, he writes, —

"Westward our immemorial chestnuts stand,
A mount of shade."

Sidney Lanier has celebrated these lordly trees in the lines entitled, *Under the Cedarcroft Chestnut.* † He apostrophizes the monarch of the group, as,

* "Household Edition," Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

† "Poems of Sidney Lanier," page 149.

"A Presence large, a grave and steadfast Form
Amid the leaves' light play and fantasy;
A calmness conquered out of many a storm,
A Manhood mastered by a chestnut tree!"

XI. Page 91

A HYMN TO THE INTELLECT

From wandering lights you read in prismal tale,
Whose every tone is wrought in unheard song,
What builds the might of distant worlds that throng
All space, and countless suns.

Those who are familiar with the physics of optics and sound, are conversant with the analogy between shades or tints of color, and musical chords. To the author, the spectrum of luminous bodies has invariably suggested musical harmonies, which have needed but the means of appealing to the sense of sound, to become conscious in the most exquisite harmonies. The specific reference is made in these lines to our knowledge of celestial bodies through the means of spectrum analysis.

A poem addressed to the Intellect in this period of its great achievement, must abound in references to the activities of modern science. The intellect

no longer expresses its energies through the medium of conventional philosophy, which, deeply absorbed with the passions, sensations and mental states of life, and its elusive spiritual problems, under the cloak of a rigorous style and method, was at heart a noble and dignified form of the poetical insight, and not infrequently, of poetical expression itself.

The intellect is no longer content with the creation of an ideal world and an imaginary plan of the universe evolved from its own musings; it has accepted the material environment, and bends its energies toward modifying and adapting the visible and tangible. The spiritual depth and poetical beauty of the old philosophies have given place to the grim, inexorable and, often, barren ciphering of science. Though science has produced profound changes in our civilization, it is debatable, whether it has yet directly contributed to a fuller expression of the vital phases of life. It has surfeited us with the minutest anatomy, but it has been unable to explain how the material investment is correlated with the spiritual forces, which dominate it. The time is not yet come "when what is now called science . . . . . [is] ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood."

But the investiture of the material anatomy of sci-

ence with the "flesh and blood" of humanity, may be awaiting only the labors of the poet. "The remotest discoveries," continues Wordsworth, "of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences, shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings." *

Interpreted literally such sentiments are too sanguine and presuppose, that an ardent appreciation of all that is poetical in life will be intensified by each increase in the popular diffusion of knowledge of the various sciences. No one should be more responsive to poetical suggestion than the scientist (not the artisan-like specialist) in love with his investigations; but experience is convincing that the two, poetry and science, are apt to prove mutually exclusive, and even jealously so. If the scientist as he progresses, can preserve that spiritual sensitiveness to beauty and Nature, which is the basis of all poetical

* WORDSWORTH'S "Prefaces," Aldine edition, vol. v., page 232.

appreciation, he will then find that science has afforded a depth of poetical suggestion and inspiration, which could not otherwise have been attained.

XII. Page 98

TRUTH AND SONG

The refrain in these verses was immediately suggested by the charming chorus from the fantastic drama by Riley,* and remotely by the refrain from the song of the Echoes of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.*

XIII. Page 108

OCTOBER

The strict sonnet form whose criterion is found in Italian verse, especially that of Dante and Petrarch, is something of an alien to the genius of our language. Though naturalized early in the development of English literature and having moulded some of its most exquisite verse, at best its melody seems dulled by the harsher rhythm and stress of our speech.

Though no one form of metrical expression is

* "The Flying Islands of the Night," page 4.

more seriously cultivated at present, than the sonnet, the results, while often exceedingly clever, are seldom satisfying. In too many instances thought and expression are sacrificed to a dominant form; with little discrimination, subjects which require lighter and more fluent melody, are garbed in the dignified and heavy measures of the accepted sonnet form. The sonnet is rarely, indeed, intrinsically interesting; and it receives attention rather as an exhibition of the skillful combination of word-stresses and rhyme,

"Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground." *

The vitality of the sonnet form must be sought in its terseness and majestic melody, rather than a happily formulated meter alone. Its fundamental is unity of thought with brief and beautiful variations. It is a vehicle for the expression of a terse idea which requires no elaboration of details. If this is conceded, the particular arrangement of the stress and rhyme in the sonnet is properly an accessory and incident, and it may with propriety be adapted and moulded to the matter and character of the expression which it clothes.

* "On the Sonnet," by Wordsworth.

Notes

The unity of thought required by the sonnet can not be sustained without loss of interest beyond two or, at most, three quatrains; and, as a musical composition is brought to an harmonious conclusion by the *coda* in which the dominant theme is reiterated, sometimes with variations, — the two, or three quatrains of the sonnet are properly, and perhaps naturally, followed by a couplet or sestet, in which, by a slight variation of the original theme, the verses are brought to a melodious conclusion.

There is something, then, that is natural in the sonnet's convention of fourteen verses, these being made up of quatrains and a couplet, or quatrains and a sestet. The recent attempt to translate the sonnets of Heredia * into unrhymed decasyllabic verses, has met with such a measure of acceptance, that it raises the question of the inviolability of the sonnet form.

In the group of poems concluding this volume, the sonnet form has been employed with liberty and latitude governed by the considerations here briefly discussed.

* "The Trophies, Sonnets Unrhymed from the French of José Maria de Heredia," translated by Frank Sewall.

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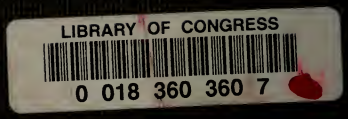
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